

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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TIME LOST EQUALS BRAIN LOST; IT'S THAT SIMPLE American Stroke Month is All About Recognition and Reaction.

(MADISON/MILWAUKEE) – Stroke is the #4 killer of Americans and is also a leading cause of long-term disability. If you or someone you know were having a stroke, would you recognize the symptoms? Just as importantly, would you know what to do? The second a stroke hits, the brain begins to suffer damage. The longer the stroke goes untreated, the greater the damage. May is American Stroke Month, a time when the American Heart Association reminds all of us to know the warning signs of stroke and to reduce our risk of stroke.

Here are the symptoms to be on the watch for:

- Sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body
- Sudden confusion, trouble speaking or trouble understanding
- Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes
- Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or loss of coordination
- Sudden severe headache with no known cause

Dr. H. Steven Block, Medical Director of the Dean & St. Mary's Stroke Center says the next step is easy. "When you suspect that someone is suffering from a stroke, dial 9-1-1 immediately. Make sure everyone from the dispatcher, to the EMTs to the nurses and doctors know that the patient may be having a stroke. This will help ensure they get the highest level of care as quickly as possible. The clot-busting drug tPA can save lives and reduce disability if it's given within three hours after an ischemic stroke starts. Ischemic strokes may be caused by clots and are, by far, the most common type of stroke."

Stroke affects people of all ages and races. Take the case of Kaela Gedda. The Green Bay native was a seemingly healthy 19-year-old college student when the unthinkable happened. Her left side got weak, she lost motor function and blacked out. "I never thought I'd become a stroke survivor at 19, but it just shows that stroke doesn't discriminate," said Gedda. Just because you're in shape, doesn't mean you're safe either. Eric Sarno of Madison found that out at the age of 36. The triathlete was training for the World Amateur Championships when he suffered a hemorrhagic stroke. Each of these survivors has made a remarkable recovery and each actively help the American Heart Association and American Stroke Association with their mission to improve cardiovascular health for all.

For more information about stroke, visit strokeassociation.org.

Watch Your Blood Pressure

High blood pressure is the biggest risk factor for stroke, and nearly one-in-three American adults suffer from this “silent killer” which often has no symptoms. The prevalence of high blood pressure in African-Americans is among the highest in the world. It’s important to know your blood pressure and to try to keep at 120/80 or lower. Ways to lower your blood pressure include regular exercise, maintaining a healthy weight, avoiding foods high in sodium, eating a diet rich in fruits, vegetables and whole-grains, controlling the amount of alcohol consumed, reducing stress, and taking blood pressure medicine as prescribed. To find out more about your risk factors for stroke, take the American Heart Association and American Stroke Association’s free health assessment at mylifecheck.org.

Governor Walker Official Proclamation

On April 24th, Governor Scott Walker signed a proclamation designating May 2012 as Stroke Month throughout the state of Wisconsin. The proclamation noted the immense financial impact of stroke on the economy. From 2010 to 2030 the direct medical costs for treating strokes are expected to rise by a staggering 238% to \$95.6 billion dollars!

Power to End Stroke Movement focuses on African-Americans

African-Americans have higher rates of stroke than any other racial or ethnic group in the United States. The purpose of the American Heart Association and American Stroke Association’s Power to End Stroke movement is empower African-Americans to reduce their risk by making healthy lifestyle changes. These include quitting smoking, exercising more and eating a healthier diet. Join us in the Health Pavilion at the “You First Women and Girls Health Expo” Saturday May 19th at the Frontier Airlines Center. This event is free to the public and will feature educational pieces about the impact stroke, from the physical to the financial. Power to End Stroke Ambassadors will be available from 10am until Noon. Visit idamj.org for more information or to register.

About the American Heart Association and American Stroke Association

The American Heart Association and the American Stroke Association are devoted to saving people from heart disease and stroke – America’s No. 1 and No. 4 killers. We team with millions of volunteers to fund innovative research, fight for stronger public health policies, and provide lifesaving tools and information to prevent and treat these diseases. The Dallas-based American Heart Association is the nation’s oldest and largest voluntary organization dedicated to fighting heart disease and stroke. The American Stroke Association is a division of the American Heart Association. To learn more or to get involved, call 1-800-AHA-USA1, visit heart.org or call any of our offices around the country.

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